

First Director of Indiana Programs

Valerie Hughes, Restorer of Dreams

by Sandra Eggers

“What’s really satisfying for me is helping to restore the dreams of parents and kids, whatever their dreams may be.”

—Valerie Hughes, Director of Indiana Programs

Dreams. Dreams are the hope beckoning from tomorrow, the wings of the soul.

For children with special learning needs, those wings have too often been clipped, cut short by those who’ve meant well but who could not see beyond the present.

But not Valerie Hughes.

“My strength, what I bring to this ministry,” reflects Valerie, “is my vision that every student has the same educational opportunities that everyone else has. Not just for their education, but that they will come to know Christ. Looking beyond the disabilities.”

Looking beyond the disabilities and helping provide opportunities to students with special learning needs has been Valerie’s calling for more than 10 years. Before coming to Lutheran Special Education Ministries, Valerie served as the curriculum manager for PEJUS, Inc., in Ft. Wayne, IN. She has also served as a teacher to students in special education; an educational consultant and, for one year, a visiting lecturer to graduate and undergraduate students



Valerie Hughes
Director of Indiana Programs

in special education at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

She is also well-grounded academically for her career, having achieved two bachelor of science degrees - one in elementary education and the other in special education - from Ball State University in Muncie, IN and a master of education degree in special education from the University of Illinois at Chicago. For all three she graduated summa cum laude.

Such academic distinctions were not always Valerie’s. Surprisingly, in the elementary grades and in high school, she was identified as the “class clown” and placed in classes that would prepare her for her high school diploma, but not lay the groundwork for college.

“I was always more interested in having fun in class,” explains Valerie. She further explains that it was through her supportive family she

maintained her self-esteem. They enabled her to fly, in spite of clipped wings, and soar into college.

Knowing firsthand how others’ expectations can define dreams for good or for ill, Valerie believes she has greater compassion and empathy for the students she serves.

“God accepts everyone. We all deserve the same riches and blessings that a Christ-filled life should bring.”

Restoring those dreams, enabling children with special learning needs to learn about their Savior, Jesus Christ, and to glorify God is what Lutheran Special Education Ministries is all about. And it’s what Valerie Hughes and her teachers are all about, too.

“Our work is to glorify God. I see that in the teachers I’ve hired. This is what we’re here to do.”

New Indiana Program

In late June of this year, Lutheran Special Education Ministries entered into a consortium agreement with three other organizations to provide special education services to Christian schools in Indiana. This now increases the number to four service sites served by Lutheran Special Ed. The other three are:

(Continued on next page)

Read more about our new Indiana teachers on Page 3 in this issue.

New Indiana Program

(Continued from cover page)

Michigan, Northern Illinois and New York.

The Indiana District of the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod; Lutheran Association of Elementary Education and the Ft. Wayne-South Bend Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church signed an agreement with Lutheran Special Ed requesting that Lutheran Special Ed provide special education services to partnership schools in Indiana.

As this article goes to press, Lutheran Special Ed is serving 10 such schools.

1997 Ephphatha Award Winner

Kathy Morris of Our Shepherd Lutheran Church, Birmingham, MI is our 1997 Ephphatha Award winner.

For more than 20 years, Kathy has taught classes for mentally and physically handicapped children and young adults, including the mentally retarded and cerebral palsied. Devising her own teaching materials from surplus Sunday school leaflets and posters, she teaches these special people the Word of God.

Kathy's students are learning firsthand about Christian community. They celebrate special occasions together; create cards and gifts for their parents and, every year, perform in their own Christmas program.

Kathy has been privileged to witness the Confirmation of eight of her students. However, her shepherding has not stopped there; Kathy continues instructing them long after they're confirmed.

Kathy will officially receive her award during the 11 AM Sunday service at Our Shepherd, Birmingham, MI, on October 26.

Congratulations, Kathy Morris, on being selected our 1997 Ephphatha Award Winner!

Do You Have a Student Like Josh?

You're teaching Confirmation class. Your students seem to be paying attention and understanding the material - well, except for Josh.

Josh can't seem to sit still for as long as the others. He's usually wiggling in his seat, tapping his pencil on his desk or gazing out the window most of the time.

When you do get him to sit still for longer than a minute — and you ask him to read - he reads much more hesitatingly than the others. And he can't seem to read even some simple words.

Basically Josh doesn't seem to be "cutting it."

Maybe Josh isn't cutting it in your class because he has a special learning need. Children with special learning needs — like attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder; visual impairments and reading disabilities — see the world differently than most of us.

If you could see what Josh perceives like you can a picture on a TV, you'd probably see a fuzzy one. That's what it's like to have a special learning need.

The information that comes to you from your eyes, ears and skin somehow gets scrambled in your brain.

Now, can you imagine what it's like to learn for children like Josh? Pretty hard, isn't it? No wonder he's "not cutting it."

But there's hope - for Josh, for you.

Through our "Operation Confirmation," you can get a handy, easy-to-use tip sheet of practical information you can use right in your classroom. Hints that help you help Josh in a positive, caring manner. So that Josh can succeed. And know for himself the power of God's Word and the strength of the Catechism.

If you would like this FREE six-page information sheet, just mark the appropriate box on the enclosed envelope and mail it. Or, you may write or call: Lutheran Special Education Ministries; Att: Ephphatha Center; 6861 East Nevada; Detroit, MI 48234 or call: (313) 368-1220 and ask for the handout "Adapting Curriculum and Instruction for Students With Special Learning Needs."

Celebrating 125 Years of Serving Children with Special Needs

On March 31, 1873, Rev. G. Speckhardt of Sebewaing, MI accepted the call to become the first superintendent for a Detroit-area Lutheran orphans' school that soon became a residential school for the deaf.

Since the beginning of this ministry, God has continued to bless and direct us to serve children with various special learning needs so that they can receive a Christian education and lead productive lives.

Today as Lutheran Special Education Ministries we serve more than 2,800 children across the nation who have special learning needs.

We praise and thank God for 125 years of His grace and blessings. We praise and thank God for all of our

friends who have partnered with us in this ministry through their prayers, their talents and their gifts.

Come and help us celebrate our 125th Anniversary in 1998. Learn more about us and about the children we serve. Assist us through your prayers, talents and gifts.

And we'll help you. Available after January 1, 1998, we can send you a free video about Lutheran Special Education Ministries and the children we serve.

Just mark the appropriate line on the enclosed envelope and drop it in the mail.

NEED WORSHIP MATERIALS? A VIDEO ABOUT OUR MINISTRY?

If your pastor would like free worship materials or an informational video on our ministry for your congregation, he can call (313) 368-1220 and we'll gladly help.



Around the Ministry

Illinois

by **Jim Krone, Director**
Illinois Programs

Terry Schepler teaches at Immanuel, East Dundee, IL. She is a 1979 graduate of Concordia University at River Forest and she's currently working on a master of science in learning disabilities at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, IL.

Nancy Sadek teaches at St. James and St. Paul (Canfield) in Chicago, IL and St. John in Forest Park, IL. She is a 1965 graduate of the University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA. In 1971 Nancy received her master of arts in special education from her alma mater.

A 1987 graduate of Concordia University in Seward, NE, **Sara Ruschmeyer** has a bachelor of arts in elementary education, special education and sociology. She teaches at Concord in Addison, IL; Cross in Yorkville, IL and St. Paul, Aurora, IL.

Indiana

by **Valerie Hughes, Director**
Indiana Programs

Dana Hardy graduated in 1990 from Emporia State University in Emporia, KS. Four years later she achieved a master of science in learning disabilities from the same institution. Dana teaches at Concordia Lutheran School in Ft. Wayne.

Teri Morris teaches at four different schools in the Ft. Wayne area: Zion Lutheran Academy, Trinity Lutheran School, Emmaus Lutheran School and Holy Cross Lutheran School. A 1989 graduate of Indiana Purdue University at Ft. Wayne, Teri is currently working on a master of science in special education.

Serving St. John Lutheran School,

Janet Jordan Altmeyer graduated in 1985 from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN. She also holds a master of science degree in emotional handicaps from St. Francis College in Ft. Wayne, IN.

A 1995 graduate of Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, IN with a bachelor of science in elementary education and special education endorsement, **Diana Habegger** teaches at St. Paul Lutheran School in Ft. Wayne, IN.

Sarah Long is nearing completion on a master of arts in special education from Indiana University/Purdue University at Ft. Wayne. She graduated with a bachelor of arts degree from DePaul University in Greencastle, IN in 1971 and, in 1979, received a teaching license in English and reading from the same institution. Sarah teaches at Unity Lutheran School in Ft. Wayne, IN.

Michigan

by **Kathy Krause, Director**
Michigan Programs

Karen Friebe teaches at St. Peter in Hemlock, MI. She just graduated this past December from Saginaw Valley State University in Saginaw, MI with a bachelor's degree in special education.

A seven-year teaching veteran who has experience in special education, **Lynn Sossi** works with students at Cornerstone Christian Schools in Detroit, MI. She is a graduate of Wayne State University, Detroit, MI.

Cheryl Chuhran teaches children at St. John's, Frasier, MI. She graduated in 1987 from Concordia College, Ann Arbor, MI with a bachelor of arts degree in elementary education.

Shanna Davis teaches at Our Savior, Lansing, MI. She graduated in 1980 with a bachelor's degree from

Michigan State University in East Lansing, MI.

A 1995 graduate of Calvin College in Grand Rapids, MI with a bachelor of arts in special education, **Kristin Mast** teaches at Immanuel, Macomb, MI.

Serving both Peace Lutheran School in Shelby, MI and Immanuel Lutheran School in Macomb, MI. **Pam Ruddick** is a veteran teacher. Pam graduated from Central Michigan University in Mt. Pleasant with a bachelor of science in education degree and K-12 special education and K-8 regular education certification.

New York

by **Paula Rosen, Director**
New York Programs

A 1995 graduate of Dowling College in Oakdale, NY with a bachelor of science degree in special education, **Kathy Burns** is currently working on her master's. She teaches at St. John's Lutheran School in Glendale, NY and Holy Trinity Community School in Hollis, NY.

Denise Abdale comes to Lutheran Special Education Ministries with nearly 20 years experience in teaching special education. A 1979 graduate from Canisius in Buffalo, NY, with a master of science in education and a master of science in deaf and hearing impaired, Denise teaches at Martin Luther High School in Maspeth, NY and Redeemer Lutheran School in Glendale, NY.

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Taking — and Giving — Stock

by Gregg Braun
Development Director

Many people own appreciated stock - stock that has risen in value over time. For example, Jane has a stock account with a well-known brokerage company. Over the past few years, one of her stocks has grown from \$15 a share to \$75 a share. If she asked her broker to sell the stock, she would owe tax on the \$60 of appreciation for each share that she sold.

However, if Jane gave the stock to a Christian ministry like Lutheran Special Education Ministries, she would entirely avoid this tax on the appreciation. Not only would she not pay tax, but she'd receive an income tax deduction on the full value of the stock.

The benefits to Jane's giving her stock to Lutheran Special Ed don't end with Jane. Since Lutheran Special Ed is a qualified charitable organization, it could sell the stock and avoid any tax on the appreciation. A win for Jane; a win for Lutheran Special Ed.

Let me show you how this works. Let's say Jane decided to give 100 shares of this stock as a year-end gift to Lutheran Special Ed. In making

the gift, she would obtain a charitable income tax deduction of \$7,500, even though she originally paid only \$1,500 for these shares.

This means that if she happens to be in the 31 percent tax bracket and claims the deduction on her itemized tax return, she could possibly save \$2,325 in taxes - more than she paid for the stock in the first place.

For many thoughtful donors, year-end is a popular time for making stock gifts. They review their stock portfolio and select those stocks that have appreciated the most and that they've held for more than a year. These donors give stock instead of cash because they've discovered the value of - and enjoy — stretching their giving power by donating the appreciation.

After all, who among us couldn't feel good knowing we've given prudently to help enable more children with special learning needs receive a Christian education? Who among us wouldn't thrill to know we're also helping these children lead productive lives?

That's what happens when you give to Lutheran Special Education Ministries.

Have you ever considered making a gift of appreciated stock to Lutheran

Special Ed? It may be better for you than making a gift of cash. To learn more about this, you may want to talk with your CPA and investment advisor.

You can also contact me directly. I'll be glad to help you make tax-wise gifts to the Lord's work. Why not call today? You can reach me by calling (313) 368-1220 and asking for Gregg Braun.

Or, if you prefer, just fill out the appropriate lines on the enclosed envelope and put it in the mail. Either way, you'll get the assistance you need.

Noel Gregory Awarded MANS Educator of Achievement

The Michigan Association of Non-public Schools (MANS) recently recognized Noel Gregory as the MANS Educator of Achievement for 1997. A Lutheran Special Education Ministries' teacher for 32 years, Noel teaches at East Bethlehem Lutheran School in Detroit, MI.

Congratulations, Noel! We've known all along that you're an excellent teacher.